GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3346
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2000
FOREST (CONSERVATION) ACT, 1980
SUBODH MOHITE;SUDARSANA E.M. NATCHIAPPAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received requests for review of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 from State Governments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto,

(d) whether the Government have formulated any plan for promoting forest conservation through participation of tribal communities; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU)

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) & (c) The requests for review of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 relate primarily to delegation of certain powers to State Governments to decide diversion of forest land for certain types of projects and for streamlining the procedures under the said Act to cut short the delay in according forest clearances. As far as delegation of powers to State Governments is concerned, Ministry of Environment and Forests has already agreed, in-principle, with the recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission on Inter-State relations to empower the State Governments to decide diversion for important public utility projects involving forest land up to five hectares. Ministry has taken several measures to streamline the procedures to cut short the delay and has taken up the matter with all State Governments to do the same within the states.

(d) & (e) The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages that primary task of all agencies responsible for forest management, including forest development corporations should be to associate closely the tribal people in the protection, regeneration and development of forests as well as to provide gainful employment to people living in and around the forests. The Ministry, within its limited means, has embarked on an ambitious plan of managing degraded forests through participation of local communities especially the weaker sections of the society under the Joint Forest Management. There are specific guidelines of this Ministry on this subject and financial assistance is also provided for the purpose under Centrally sponsored Schemes. As a result of this more than 10 million hectare of forests are being managed through Joint Forest Management Committees in various States.